

CLAIMS

Please amend the presently pending claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Method of authenticating a telecommunication terminal, called client, for access to at least one virtual network ~~which~~ that allows the client to access the services of at least one service provider, the or each virtual network being set up on a telecommunication network, the method being performed with a data processing arrangement and comprising:

- determining ~~if a the compatibility of~~ software of the client ~~with~~ and a predetermined access control protocol for access to the virtual network are compatible,

- if the software of the client and the predetermined access control protocol are ~~is~~ not compatible ~~with the predetermined access control protocol~~, authorising data transfer between the client and at least one subscription system for subscribing the client to at least one service provider via an authentication network, which is different from the or each virtual network ~~which~~ that allows the client to access the services of the or each service provider,

- if the non-compatible client subscribes to at least one service provider via the authentication network, transferring to the non-compatible client an authentication for accessing the virtual network ~~which~~ that allows access to the services of the service provider to which the non-compatible client is subscribed and information which makes it possible to make the software of the client compatible with the predetermined access control protocol.

2. (Previously Presented) Method according to Claim 1, wherein the authentication network is a virtual network or a network that is separate from the telecommunication network.

3. (Previously Presented) Method according to Claim 1, wherein the subscription system includes at least one subscription portal, an authentication material server and, in response to the

client subscribing to a service, the subscription portal transfers to an authentication server data associated with the authentication transferred to the client.

4. (Previously Presented) Method according to Claim 3, wherein the client is connected to the network via a Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexor and, if the client is compatible with the predetermined access control protocol, the Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexor performs the steps of obtaining an identifier and a client authentication material and of obtaining a client authentication confirmation from the authentication server.

5. (Previously Presented) Method according to Claim 4, wherein, if the authentication server does not confirm the authentication of the client, the method comprises a step of authorising data transfer between the client and at least one subscription system for subscribing the client to at least one service provider via an authentication network which is different from the virtual networks which allow a client to access the services of at least one service provider.

6. (Previously Presented) Method according to Claim 3, wherein there is a transfer to the authentication server of information associated with the service provider to which the client is subscribed and/or information characterizing the service to which the client is subscribed.

7. (Previously Presented) Method according to Claim 6, wherein the authentication server additionally transfers to the Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexor the information associated with the service provider to which the client is a client and/or the information relating to the service or services to which the client is subscribed.

8. (Currently Amended) Method according to Claim 7, wherein the Digital Subscriber Line

Access Multiplexor authorises data transfer between the virtual network ~~which~~ that allows the client to access the services of the service provider to which the client is subscribed according to the communication speeds to which the client is subscribed.

9. (Currently Amended) Method according to Claim 1, wherein an address server is also associated with the virtual authentication network, and ~~in that~~ wherein the address server allocates an address to the client for data transfer on the virtual authentication network.

10. (Currently Amended) Method according to Claim 1, wherein the telecommunication network is a high-speed network based on Ethernet technology, and ~~in that~~ wherein the predetermined access control protocol is a protocol of the IEEE 802.1x type, and ~~in that~~ the clients are connected to the Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexor via connections of the DSL type.

11. (Currently Amended) System for authenticating a telecommunication terminal, called client, for access to at least one virtual network for allowing the client to access the services of at least one service provider, the or each virtual network being set up on a telecommunication network, the system comprising:

- processing means for determining if a ~~the compatibility of~~ software of the client ~~with~~ and a predetermined access control protocol for access to the telecommunication network are compatible,

- authorisation means for authorising, if the software of the client and the predetermined access control protocol are ~~is not compatible with the predetermined access control protocol~~, data transfer between the non-compatible client and at least one subscription system,

- at least one subscribing means for subscribing the client to at least one service provider via a network which is different from the virtual networks which allow a client to access the services

of a service provider, and a

- transfer means for transferring to the non-compatible client, if the non-compatible client subscribes to at least one service provider via the authentication network, an authentication for accessing the virtual network, which allows access to the services of the service provider to which the non-compatible client is subscribed and information which makes it possible to make the software of the client compatible with the predetermined access control protocol.

12. ~~A computer readable-medium~~ memory having stored thereon ~~or a storage device having stored thereon~~ a computer program including instructions ~~for enabling a computer to carry out the authentication method of Claim 1,~~ which when run by a computer perform a method of authenticating a telecommunication terminal, called client, for access to at least one virtual network that allows the client to access the services of at least one service provider, the or each virtual network being set up on a telecommunication network, the method comprising:

- determining if a software of the client and a predetermined access control protocol for access to the virtual network are compatible,

- if the software of the client and the predetermined access control protocol are is not compatible, authorising data transfer between the client and at least one subscription system for subscribing the client to at least one service provider via an authentication network which is different from the or each virtual network that allows the client to access the services of the or each service provider,

- if the non-compatible client subscribes to at least one service provider via the authentication network, transferring to the non-compatible client an authentication for accessing the virtual network that allows access to the services of the service provider to which the non-compatible client is subscribed and information which makes it possible to make the software of the client compatible with the predetermined access control protocol.

13. (Currently Amended) Digital Subscriber Line Access Multiplexor which allows at least one client to access the services of at least one service provider, the ~~client~~ digital subscriber line access multiplexor being arranged for relaying the information transmitted by the client and associated with authentication of the client to an authentication server, the client line multiplexor including a software module according to the IEEE 802.1x standard for relaying the information associated with the authentication.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the method authenticates the client to the services of plural service providers via plural virtual networks wherein if the software of the client and the predetermined access control protocol are is not compatible ~~with the predetermined access control protocol~~, authorising data transfer between the client and plural subscription systems for subscribing the client to plural service providers via the authentication network ~~which~~ that allows the client to access the services of each service provider.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11 wherein the system is arranged for accessing plural virtual networks for allowing the client to access plural service providers and each virtual network is set up on the telecommunication network, wherein: (a) the authorisation means is arranged for subscription systems, (b) the subscribing means is arranged for subscribing plural service providers via the network, and (c) the transfer means is arranged for transferring to the new compatible client, if the non-compatible client subscribes to plural service providers.